Mapping the Connection Between Transit and Public Health in Greater Minnesota

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INTRODUCTIONS

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WEBINAR OUTLINE

KEY POINTS

• Background
• Rural Transit and Public Health
• How Rural Transit Works in Minnesota
• Example from Minnesota: Bryan McCoy, Headwaters Development Commission
• Questions and Discussion
Background

“Urban planning and public health share common missions and perspectives. Both aim to improve human well-being, emphasize needs assessment and service delivery, manage complex social systems, focus at the population level, and rely on community-based participatory methods. ...(B)oth fields have expanded their tools and perspectives, in part because of the influence of the other.”

-Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Where do rural transit and public health overlap?
Rural Health And Transit

• About 3.7 percent of rural households use public transit, compared to 17.3 percent of all American households (ASHTO, 2017)

• In contrast with what is done in urban settings, rural health/transit programs and research often at a clinical level
  – Healthcare services
  – Disruption of ongoing treatments
  – Distance costs

Source: Macatawa Area Express, catchamax.org
Addressing SDOH through Public Transit

• How can we address the **conditions** that cause poor health outcomes in addition to the poor outcomes themselves through transit?
  
  — Rural populations more likely to suffer chronic illness than urban counterparts
  
  — Rural households more insecure than urban counterparts (15.5% vs. 12.5%) (RHI)
  
  — Although fewer rural residents live in USDA-defined “food deserts,” the definition of food desert is not inclusive of rural residents without vehicle access

Source: Greater Minnesota 2017-2037 Transit Investment Plan, MnDOT
Equality

Equity
What is going on with transit planning and public health in Greater Minnesota?
HOW DOES RURAL TRANSIT WORK IN MINNESOTA?

Source: Greater Minnesota 2017-2037 Transit Investment Plan, MnDOT
WHAT RURAL TRANSIT PLANNERS ARE FACING

Challenges

• Population growth
• Aging population
• Job access
• Childcare
• Climate/weather
• Funding
• Focus on urban centers

Opportunities

• Volunteer drivers
• Partnership and collaborations
• Transit-Oriented Development
• Safe Routes to School
• Uber, Lyft, etc.
SQUARE PEG, ROUND HOLE...
How can we bridge the gap?
Based In Bemidji, MN
- 5 Counties
- 22 Cities
- 2 Tribal Nations, plus strong connection with Leech Lake
- 84,755 Population
- 18% Age 65 or older
- 17% of Population Below Poverty Level

Primary Programs
- Housing Development
- Economic Development
- Sustainability Planning
- Business Development
- Transportation Planning

Regional Transportation Coordination Council
Regional Transportation Coordination Council (RTCC)

Minnesota Department of Transportation describes RTCCs as consisting of stakeholders interested in improving mobility for “transportation disadvantaged” – older adults, individuals with disabilities, individuals with low incomes, and/or military veterans.

- 18 RTCCs Across Minnesota
- Locally Driven Organizational Structure
- July 1, 2020 is Year 3 of Process
Headwaters RTCC

Serves As Advisory Board
15 Members (At Least 2 From Each County)
1. County Social Services
2. Community Action
3. Tribal Services
4. Youth Services
5. Public Transit
6. Employment Services
7. Elected Officials
8. Private Sector
9. Disability Services
Meet Bi-Monthly

Regional Goals

• Expand transportation options for underserved populations

• Develop better collaboration between transportation providers within the region

• Be a central source of public transportation information

• Provide planning and additional expertise to transportation providers

• Arrange personalized mobility service for the public and area agencies
Locally Identified Issues

- Medical Transportation
- Availability of Volunteer Drivers
- 2\textsuperscript{nd}/3\textsuperscript{rd} Shift Workforce Transportation
- Court Transportation
- On-Demand Mobility
- Transportation to/from outside of region i.e Baudette To Rochester
- Access To Fresh Food
Access To Fresh Food

- Identified In 2016 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan
- Brought Up Again During RTCC Investigation Phase
- 7% of Households Do Not Own A Vehicle
- Significant Portion Of Area Is In “Low Access” Census Tract as defined by USDA
Identified Problems

- Lack Of Daily Public Transit In Some Areas
  (Zero Offer Sunday Service)
- Bag Limitations
- All Transit Needs To Be Pre-Scheduled
- Limited Volunteer Programs or Drivers
- Some Congregate Meal Sites Lack Public Transit
- No Grocery Delivery Service Outside Bemidji
Focused Community Projects

Blackduck

• Population 821
• 20% Age 65+
• 23% Below Poverty Level
• One Grocery Store
• Nearby City of Kelliher (pop. 262) Has No Grocery Store
• 1x week public transit

Bemidji Mobile Food Pantry

• Founded In 1982
• 925,000 lbs Of Food in 2019
• Deep Winter Greenhouse & Fresh Garden
• Partnering With Bemidji’s United Way in 2020 To Develop A Mobile Food Pantry
• Looking To Expand Delivery Service To Blackduck & Kelliher
Currently In Planning Stages

✓ Meeting With Grocery Store Owners
✓ Developing A Public Survey
✓ Identifying Partners
✓ Evaluating Options
  ▪ Volunteer Grocery Delivery Service
  ▪ Call-In Pickup Service
  ▪ Transportation To Grocery Store
  ▪ Safe Routes To Grocery Store
Contact Info

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Food security is when people have reliable access to sufficient, affordable, nutritious food to support a healthy life.
Questions & Discussion
RESOURCES:

RHIhub
Rural Health Information Hub

Rural Transportation Toolkit

Rural Food Access Toolkit

Connecting Transportation & Health:
A Guide to Communication & Collaboration
Want to get in touch with your local RTCC?
CONTACT US

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